DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 392 CE 053 462

AUTHOR Stanage, Sherman M.
TITLE The Realization of "Person": A Phenomenology of the "Economics" of Development.
PUB DATE 2 Nov 88
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (Tulsa, OK, November 2, 1988).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adult Learning; *Economic Development; *Economics; *Educational Philosophy; *Educational Theories; Ethics; History; Moral Values; *Phenomenology; Postsecondary Education; *Self Actualization

ABSTRACT

Two very different ethical theories are involved in adult education: (1) the ethics of self-realization; and (2) the ethics of utilitarianism. The first theory presupposes that every person ought to realize and actualize the qualitatively fullest life possible for that person, whatever that person's circumstances in life. The second theory presupposes that all human relationships ought to be articulated in accordance with the principle of utility, or the greatest happiness for the greatest number with the minimization of pain. It might be possible to begin to reconcile these two conflicting ethical theories, such that each person might achieve the fullest self-realization and communities of persons their fullest economic development. To reach such a reconciliation, it is necessary to take into account what "economics" meant in Greek and Latin terms, and how a narrow, money-specific understanding of the concepts of economics completely fails to grasp the wide and deep cultural, intellectual, and emotional sense of "economics." Understanding of these historical meanings of "economy" can be applied to the economy of development, along with the realization of person. The ethical theories of self-realization and utilitarianism must be reconciled as a necessary presupposition for coherent and consistent theory, practice, and research in adult education. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED312392

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S Stanage

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Dr. Sherman M. Stanage
Professor of Philosophy and
Professor of Leadership and Educational Policy Studies - Adult Education
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Il 60115

THE REALIZATION OF **PERSON**: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE "ECONOMICS" OF DEVELOPMENT

The very first look at the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education conference theme for 1988 makes it quite clear that two very different ethical theories are involved. These two normative ethical theories are (1) the ethics of self-realization and (2) the ethics of utilitarianism.

The first theory presupposes that each and every person ought to realize and actualize the qualitatively fullest life possible for that person, whatever that person's circumstances in life. The second theory presupposes that all human relationships ought to be articulated in accordance with the principle of utility, or the greatest happiness principle: pleasure should be maximized, and pain should be minimized, for the greatest number of persons, whatever their circumstances in life.

In philosophical contexts generally, these two theories are conflictive theories of normative ethics. But many philosophers frequently neither heed nor appreciate the fact that philosophers can distinguish relevant intellectual regions of "the world" and then "do philosophy" in "the world". "Doing philosophy" routinely (although certainly not always) means performing thought experiments about these intellectual regions of "the world" without necessarily facing any presssing need to change "the world".

It has become very clear to me (as a philosopher who does adult education, or as an adult educator who philosophizes, or both) that adult education as theory, practice, and research cannot afford the luxury of merely performing thought experiments. Adult educators are faced with the awesome task of inquiring into "the world" both in order to understand it and in order to change it. Therefore, adult educators are further called upon to perform prodigious feats of the intellect and to use these successfully in changing "the world". Adult educators are expected to solve and resolve problems which the philosophers themselves generally have been unable to resolve. One of these problems, of course, is the conflict between a self-realization ethic and a utilitarian ethic.

In this brief paper, itself a stage along an intellectual way, I want to show how it might be possible to begin to reconcile these two conflictive ethical theories, such that each person might achieve the fullest self-realization and communities of persons their fullest economic development. Perhaps neither the philosophers nor the adult educators will be happy (in a maximizing manner) with my proposal, but their **person** at least will have been

CE053162

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

further realized and actualized by thinking more concretely -- and therefore very differently -- about the problems involved in bringing these two ethical theories into some degree of reconciliation.

In this brief paper, specifically, (1) I want to provide a description of the residue of a phenomenological account and clarification of what "economics" meant in Greek and Latin terms long before it became money-specific in capitalistic terms in the Western world, and became, as a consequence, easy intellectual and emotional prey to the full, rich, and lasting critiques of Karl Marx. (2) I also want to use this phenomenological clarification to show how a narrow, money-specific understanding of the concept(s) of economics completely fails to grasp the wide and deep cultural, intellectual, and emotional sense of "economics." Finally (3) I will gather up all of the lines of this phenomenological project into an account of the realization of **person** and the "economics" of development.

The Meaning of "Economy" in Western Thought

What springs to mind when we hear the term "economics"? Money. Less money than we need, more money that we would like to have. Money. We might have taken courses in economics. We might have studied economic theories. We might have found out that there is in this 20th century of advanced learning no theory of economics which can guide great nations in the ways of a peaceful economy with a high probability of success. Money.

Every theory of economics which provides an understanding and explanation of "full employment" and the full realization of persons which are supposed to be rendered possible by money is based solely upon empirical foundations which articulate concrete preparation for potential war, the waging of actual war, or the recovery from actual war. It is in this context, in fact, that the "trickle-down" phenomenon so indigenous to the special form of capitalistic economics espoused by Reaganomics must be understood. Economics is money-specific in the minds of everyone. Money.

And economics as money-specific is certainly most important on the minds of my undergraduate students in general education courses in philosophy. Their lives are money-specific; their self-images are money-specific; their concepts of person are money-specific; and just about the only things they can pack into the meanings of concepts of the realization of **person** are money-specific. This is as far as the economic theories of capitalism have come in our consciousing within the community of persons within these United States, and within the consciousings of individual persons within this community. And among the worst ingredients of capitalistic economics for, with, by, and through our young people is this: our young people tend to project their lives, their hopes, their dreams, their plans, and their expectations in the restricting and minimalizing terms of economics

as nothing but money-specific. Money.

Some of the earliest recorded uses of the term "economy" are found in The Oxford English Dictionary. The Greek term, **oikonomia**, (from **oiko-s**, house, + **nomos**, f. **nemein**, to manage, control), in the earliest uses referred to the management of a household, or to management generally. It also referred to the art or science of managing a household, especially with regard to household expenses. It referred to the manner in which a household, or a person's private expenditures, might be ordered. Economy referred to a society ordered after the manner of a family, and to the rules which control a person's mode of living, the regimen, or even the diet of a person.

In a wider sense -- in the 17th century, with Thomas Hobbes, for example -- economy referred to the administration of the concerns and resources of any community or establishment with a view to orderly conduct and productiveness, and to the art and science of such administration. It connoted the careful management of resources -- any kind of resource -- so as to make them go as far as possible. The term somewhat later was used with reference to such things as time, personal ability, and labor.

All the while, even as early as the translation of the Greek term into the Latin, **oeconomia**, the term "economy" had taken on a variety of extraordinarily important meanings in the early traditions of the Christian faith. In that development, economy referred to the method of the divine government of the world, or to a specific department or portion of that government ("oeconomy of heaven," the "oeconomy of our salvation," the "divine oeconomy as revealed in the New Testament"). Economy came to mean "politic administration", or the presentation of theological doctrine in such a manner as to suit the needs of, or to conciliate, the prejudices of the persons addressed by the Church. Hence the very important tradition in Roman Catholic faith and morals identified as "the oeconomy of truth".

From the 17th century on, in the literary, intellectual, and philosophical contexts, economy has been grounded in the theological context, but extended beyond it. It came to mean the structure, arrangement, or proportion of parts, of any product of human design. Robert Boyle, in his work on physical mechanics, spoke of the "whole oeconomy of the body," and another scientist spoke of the "oeconomy of the brain." Physicians spoke of the "oeconomy of the body in rejecting poison" and other foreign substances, for example.

Thomas Hobbes wrote, in 1651, "In old time there was a manner of living, and as it were, a certain oeconomy... living by Rapine." Finally, David Hume wrote, in 1777, "With regard to the oeconomy of the mind... vice is indeed pernicious." Indeed, for three hundred years, scientists in Western culture have written textbooks and other scholarly works about animal economy, vegetable economy,

the economy of nature, and have sometimes referred to particular communities of persons, or to some orderliness within human society as a whole.

Cultural, Intellectual, and Emotional Understanding of "Economy"

The important point is this: persons cannot deal with the-real-world-as-a-whole all at once. Each of us can only deal with a relevant, selected portion of "the world" at any given moment in consciousness. This is the essential structure of our **person**, or personhood. What most distinguishes each of us from the other animals on this planet is that we 'relevantize' portions of "the world" by reflecting on, in, of, through "the world." We think about "the world." We think "the world."

Within the 'everydayness' of our placement in "the world" as persons we 'relevantize,' 'possibilize,' 'metaphorize,' and 'vitalize' "the world." We do this through thinking, through reflection. And most fundamentally we do this through thinking about thinking itself. Thinking about thinking is fundamental to the phenomenon of knowing that we know. And of course both of these are the fundaments of learning how to learn.

All thought, all knowing, and all learning, within the context of **person** take place for the sake of action. Persons perform actions of thinking, knowing, and learning in order to understand their **person** in the purposeful, willful effort of learning how to live. Moreover, these words instantiate our common belief that it is necessary to structure and order thinking, knowing, and learning in order to maximize purposive action within limited temporal spans available to each of us as we live through more and more restrictive spaces on the planetary surface.

I believe that these remarks have brought us to this point: The most essential structure of economy for us to get clear about is the economy of thought. Call it "thought-economy" as Edmund Husserl (the founder of the modern philosophical movement called phenomenology) did. Perhaps we can give it an especially ugly name (so that we will always remember what it means, and so nobody else will think of using the term, much less of abusing it!): The most essential structure of economy is "thinking-knowing-learning-economy," or "TKL-Economy."

In the special terms of western historical and cultural rootage the epistemological paradigm of economy in Western thought is orderliness, management, and control. This is what the narratives and the texts have handed down to us. Therefore, what first leaps into our consciousness when we hear and see the term "economics," the money-specific paradigm, is a massive falsification of a necessary paradigm of meaning. One can only conclude that this frightening fact richly reveals how far capitalistic economics has led us in our flight from thinking grounded in our most fundamental societal and cultural roots. The orderliness, management, and

control of oneself, the community of persons, and even the resources of our planet, are not effected merely by money. In fact, in these respects, the money-specific understanding of economy is bankrupt.

Our experience with capitalistic economics clearly has shown that money can do this to us. The correction would be: We ought not to let money, as the orderliness, management, and control paradigm of economic capitalism do this to any of us, especially in the rich context of our AAACE 1988 Conference on "adult education through personal and economic development!"

I have always considered important professional conferences to be, ideally, places and times set aside for continuing conversation, and for wide-ranging, disciplined criticisms of the intellect, performed by dedicated workers who have committed themselves to an intersubjective focus on selected problems in the practice, theory, and research in their discipline(s). Certain problems and questions (from within an infinite range of problems and questions constituting human bondages within the human condition) have been selected. The paradigm of economy is at work. How and why is this the case?

The Economy of Development

The selection of problems and questions is itself the articulation of orderliness, management, and control. The principle of economy is at work. In the midst of conversations and disciplined criticism during any valuable professional conference the principle of economy is at work. The meaning of economy is not money-specific in either case. The selection of problems and questions, the continuing conversations, and the disciplined criticism and self-criticism are among phenomena which are relevantized for the moment.

They are the focus for the moment. They are the intuited phenomena in terms of which we can begin to bring together all of the loose strands of other phenomena within a phenomenology of the "economics of development." We can begin right here. We can begin with this place and with this time. Right now! We can begin by pursuing the range of inquiries within the context of this conference and with the range of themes laid out in the conference program. In this phenomenological moment we are focussing intersubjectively upon economy, economization, and economics in non-money-specific ways.

Indeed, the most essential structures in the understanding of economy, economics, and economizings have nothing whatever to do with money matters. Recognizing this we can see a vast new horizon opening up for adult education. For example, we can see the obvious point that theories are economizings. Practices are economizings. Among personal practices, habits are unique economizing and life-preserving economizings.

And another obvious point follows: Practices necessarily rest upon suppositions and presuppositions of theory. Therefore two different kinds of economizations are fused together in such a way that we say that one's theories and practices (ideally) must be coherent and consistent. Coherence and consistency themselves are special forms of "TKL-Economy."

And what about research? Research is performed in economizing ways, or through what we call models, methodologies, and methods of research . Research is at least a search (from the Latin **circare**, to go around). Reflect carefully now on what a search is. A search is a seeking-out, an exploration, or the thorough examination of something. It is a personal action which takes place over time and in the midst of circumstances constituting a situation. A search is the ascertaining of the presence or absence of certain phenomena in order to bring to light, to discover, to un-conceal, whatever might be present, particularly in the case of whether the searched-for-'object' is present or not. A person reaches out in an effort to locate, to test, and to reveal. A search might be a penetration more deeply into the 'everydayness' of the familiar lifeworlds of persons. Research might be inquiry pursued into the great vastnesses of whatever phenomena seem puzzling, surprising, or shocking in the light and concet of present information and knowledge. But fundamental to any searching is the examination of phenomena. Phenomena located and situated within matrices of other relevant phenomena are observed and described. They become 'data'.

The Realization of **Person** and the "Economics" of Development

This account of my investigation leads me to claim that the realization of **person** and the "economics"of development can be seen as distinguishable but inseparable structures of the same cluster of phenomena. It seems to me that of the two normative ethical theories with which we started, self-realization and utilitarianism, the most popular one in Western ethics, utilitarianism, emerges out of self-realization ethics. Still, utilitarianism appears to many philosophers to be the simpler theory to lay out, to clarify, and to defend against all other theories of Western ethics. Indeed, it is difficult to see what local, county, state, federal, (and even "world"), government planning might be like now without its prevalent utilitarian bases.

A phenomenological investigation pursued, and even this very brief sketch of it, should suffice to show that utilitarianism is founded in the fullest self-realization of **person** of each person possible. This presents the reconciliation of these two theories, and provides a conceptual foundation for the conference theme this year. It is probable, however, that few philosophers would accept this presentation of reconciliation. The conflict between these theories is too long-standing and encrusted in philosophical contexts. But remember that although all philosophers must reflect upon "the world," most of them sense no imperative to change it.

For adult educators, however, the imperative and mission are different: They must describe "the world" and understand it precisely in order to change it. Therefore, the ethical theories of self-realization and utilitarianism must be reconciled as a necessary presupposition for coherent and consistent theory, practice, and research in adult education.

[1]

I close with a parable drawn from Thoreau's Walden. It is a passage suggested to me by Mr. David Marshall, a graduate student currently enrolled (Fall, 1988) in my graduate course in "phenomenology and adult education".

[2]

> "... a strolling Indian went to sell baskets at the house of a well-known lawyer in my neighborhood. 'Do you wish to buy any baskets?' he asked. 'No, we do not want any,' was the reply. 'What!' exclaimed the Indian as he went out the gate, 'do you mean to starve us?' Having seen his industrious white neighbors so well off, -- that the lawyer had only to weave arguments, and by some magic wealth and standing followed, -- he had said to himself: I will go into business; I will weave baskets; it is a thing which I can do. Thinking that when he had made the baskets he would have done his part, and then it would be the white man's part to buy them. He had not discovered that it was necessary for him to make it worth the other's while to buy them, or at least make him think that it was so, or to make something else which it would be worth his while to buy. I too had woven a kind of basket of a delicate texture, but I had not made it worth anyone's while to buy them. Yet, not the less, in my case, did I think it worth my while to weave them, and instead of studying how to make it worth men's while to buy my baskets, I studied rather how to avoid the necessity of selling them. The life which men praise and regard as successful is but one kind. Why should we exaggerate any one kind at the expense of the others?"

Notes

[1] Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Civil Disobedience, ed. Sherman Paul, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957, 1960, pp. 12-13.

[2] I gratefully acknowledge the rich commentary and most valuable assistance provided by all of the members of this graduate course as we discussed the penultimate draft of this presentation.